

Submission over Naplan testing 2010.

I am a teacher of 28 years practice in public schools, and do not wish to be identified.

I have no problem with Naplan testing as such – but major problems with the publication of simple league tables – as done by the Australian Newspaper a short while ago.

I have worked in both affluent and poor metropolitan communities. I am employed over multiple sites.

None of my students in the wealthier areas have ever had siblings with severe disability (such that parents are full time caregivers and will be so for evermore).

I have two students this year, in the poorest regions of the city, with siblings with severe disability. Years ago, I saw one of my Year 9 students driving her very disabled (MS) mother to the shops – they lived a considerable distance into the semi-rural fringe of the metro area. I made the decision not to report this action – this family was desperately attempting to make ends meet. I have students who stay with their parents in extended-hours family owned shops. They are unable to complete their homework and practice their parts. I remain concerned for their welfare in these semi-public places.

I have challenged the *Australian* as to what it is really celebrating in the NapLan league tables – luck that a family is wealthy and free from disabilities? That some family units are able to earn sufficient income is within the normal school hours? That some families are naturally advantaged with the language? Or advantaged with the lifestyle of formal study? I will not be purchasing the *Australian* for the rest of 2010.

I don't believe the *Australian* or any other media outlet, is the correct forum for professional discussion.

There are professional difficulties when one moves from an affluent area to a poor area – as my unique salaried employment enables me to do so.

In the wealthy area I find my teaching skills to be valued greatly in Primary Schools but looked down upon in Secondary Schools where parents are encouraged by fellow school based staff, to seek private tuition in my area. It is professionally demoralizing. It is damaging to my skill base. It residualises public secondary education.

In the poorer area I find a thousand petty obstacles are placed in my way to frustrate me by fellow school based staff at both Primary and Secondary levels, when I am achieving good results and enabling these students to compete successfully against my other students for access to extra-curricula activities.

The AEU is aware of both situations I face. I am a graduate of an Honours bachelor degree, before gaining a postgraduate teaching diploma. I am also a workplace AEU rep, and have been so for many years.

The upshot is that I have only 11 years until retirement, and I have actively encouraged my children away from education as a career. I am still teaching because of my beliefs and tenacity. My partner earns a lot more in another profession.

NapLan testing is fine, when it is kept within the profession of teaching, for vigorous debate.

It is impossible, in my opinion, to have this vigorous and necessary debate, with the type and style of the media we have, present at the table.

I believe that education is a cultural process, not a product.

I believe that the status and salary of teaching is such that it will not attract the best to the profession.

I believe the current situation in all schooling sectors is the result of years of neglect and denigration by politicians, ambiguous funding, private enterprise attitudes, macro economic failure in certain communities

and the triumph of consumerism into family life.

These are issues, which politicians and community leaders are responsible for.